

Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ Project Board Meeting 27



Date: 22 January 2026

Time: 1530hrs

Venue: Online via Teams video conferencing

Agenda:

1. Apologies
2. Notes of last meeting
3. Actions and Decisions
4. Progress against ARM plan (SH)
5. Risk review
 - a. Project Risks (SH)
 - b. MCZ Risks (SH)
6. ARM budgets and Funding (SH)
7. Research Task & Finish Group update (RWJ)
8. Management Task & Finish Group update (LG)
9. Stakeholder Group update (EC)
10. Evidence subgroup (LG)
11. Communications update (EC)
12. Date of next meeting (SH)
13. AOB

Item 4: Progress against ARM plan

Verbal update. Please see progress tracker below.

ARM Plan		RAG rating	2021				2022				2023				2024				2025				2026				2027				
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Assess	Potting Assessment		v5.0																												
	Interim report																														
Management	Voluntary Code of Best Practice	Define the issues																													
		Develop and appraise																													
		Implement																													
		Monitor																													
		Evaluate and adapt																													
	Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Byelaw 2023	Byelaw	Define the issues																												
			Develop and appraise																												
			Seek confirmation																												
		Implement																													
		Monitor																													
		Evaluate and adapt																													
		Permit conditions	Define the issues																												
Develop and appraise																															
Seek confirmation																															
Implement																															
Monitor																															
Evaluate and adapt																															
Research	Assessing impacts of potting																														
	Mapping sensitive features																														
	Mapping fishing activities																														
	Trialing alternative fishing practices																														
	Determining the value of rugged chalk																														

Q1: Jan - Mar
 Q2: Apr - Jun
 Q3: Jul - Sep
 Q4: Oct - Dec

RAG rating:

- On track/complete
- Delayed
- Not started/ significant delay
- Scheduled

Key Milestones:

- Potting Assessment updated
- Code of Best Practice launched
- Interim report 2023 published
- Byelaw agreed by the Authority
- Permit conditions confirmed
- Final rugged chalk extent defined
- Baseline fishing activity determined
- Second review of permit conditions
- Findings from disturbance study
- Third review of permit conditions
- Interim report 2025 published
- Byelaw comes into effect
- Value of rugged chalk determined
- First review of permit conditions
- Potting Assessment updated

Item 5a: Project Risk Assessment Review (December 2025)

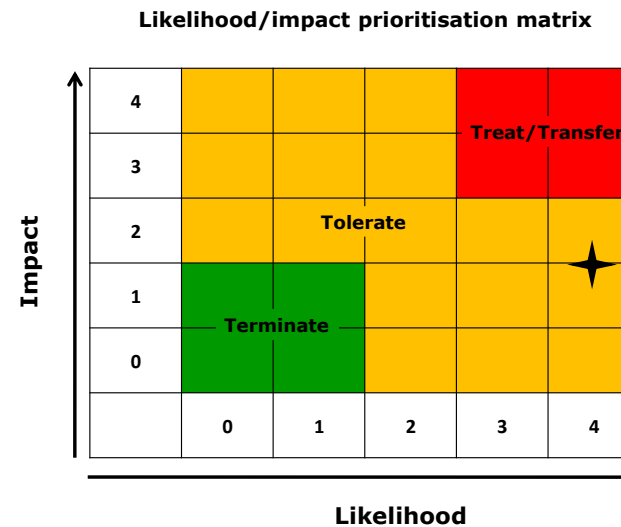
Verbal update. Please see risk review below.

Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ Adaptive Risk Management Project: Risk Management

This risk matrix sets out risks to completion of the project's aims, considering the severity of the impact and the likelihood of such occurring, and the mitigation in place or needed to address the risk as necessary.

Impact and likelihood is ranked on an arbitrary scale from 0 (low) to 4 (high) and plotted on figure 1 (below) to identify a level of associated risk for each factor identified. One of four actions are assigned to each risk factor dependant on the level of risk as per the table below.

Treat	Take positive action to mitigate risk
Tolerate	Acknowledge and actively monitor risk
Terminate	Risk no longer considered to be material to Eastern IFCA business
Transfer	Risk is out with Eastern IFCA's ability to treat and is transferred to higher level.



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Project Risk Assessment Review (December 2025)

Identified Risk	Risk Score (last review)	Action taken	Current risk	Further action required to mitigate risk
Non-compliance with voluntary and mandatory management measures.	3	No action required.	3 Severity: high (3) - no change Likelihood: unlikely (1) – no change. Once incursion detected over the last period which is currently under investigation. Occurred following a storm which resulted in loss of marker buoys. Redeployment of buoys was prioritised and completed within a couple of days. With this mitigation risk remains low and no incursions have since been detected.	No further action required.
The Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Byelaw 2023 is not confirmed or is significantly delayed	4	No action required.	4 Severity: very high (4) – no change Likelihood: unlikely (1) – no change	No further action required
Failure to implement management measures which are proportionate to the risk posed and adequately precautionary	8	No action required.	8 Severity: very high (4) – no change Likelihood: possible (2) – no change	No further action required
Failure to evidence effectiveness of management measures	4	No action required.	4 Severity: very high (4) – no change Likelihood: unlikely (1) – no change	No further action required
Lack of stakeholder buy-in for management measures	6	No action required.	6 Severity: high (3) - no change Likelihood: possible (2) – no change	No further action required

Change in Natural England advice (i.e. that a precautionary approach is required)	3	No action required.	3	Severity: high (3) - no change Likelihood: unlikely (1) – no change	No further action required
Inability to secure funding for the project	4	The FASS application has been formally accepted but the outcome of the application is still pending. A small amount of funding has been secured from NE to support the Rates of Damage Assessment.	4	Severity: very high (4) - no change Likelihood: unlikely (1) – no change	Continue identifying other sources of funding.
Inability to deliver research projects (particularly practical components including vessel breakdown, research equipment / contractors unavailable, poor weather, lack of internal resources)	6	Continued careful planning and project management.	6	Severity: high (3) - no change Likelihood: possible (2) – no change	Continued careful planning and project management.
Vessel positional data not available to monitor fishing activities and Natural Disturbance Study Closed areas.	5	No action required.	5	Severity: high (3) –no change Likelihood: possible (2) – no change	No further action required

Item 5b: MCZ Risk Review

Currently under review. Verbal update.

Item 6: ARM Budgets and Funding

Report by: Samantha Hornbrey, SMSO

Purpose: To provide an update on project costs and secured funding for ARM related workstreams to inform members of the financial restraints and requirements and to ensure transparency.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that members:

- **Note** the contents of the report

Report

This report provides an update on the financial projections for each ARM workstream:

Fishing Activity Mapping

No external funding has been identified for this project for the 2025/2026 financial year.

Interim measures were agreed at the 59th Authority Meeting (12 March 2025) to mandate the provision of vessel positional data from vessels fishing in the MCZ using Byelaw 11 (Development of Shellfish Fisheries). To facilitate compliance with interim measures the Authority have provided trackers to fishers who require them. The total cost of this to the Authority so far has been £1482.54 (excluding VAT) for the current financial year. The national requirement for IVMS has now come into force and so further subscription renewals will be reviewed on a case by case basis depending on the availability of IVMS data for individual fishers.

Tagging Project

Specific project funding for this project ceased at the end of 2024, consequently, additional costs to the Authority have so far been £379.05 (excluding VAT) for the current financial year.

Adaptive Gear Trials

This project has been put on hold due to resource constraints and competing higher priority projects.

Natural Disturbance Study

Officers have been successful in securing £12,000 of funding from the MBIEG¹ for multibeam data analysis. A FASS² funding application has also been submitted for a further £95,000. Whilst the application has been formally accepted the outcome is still pending.

A breakdown of estimated costs for the project for the current financial period is provided in Table 1.

¹ Marine Biodiversity Impact Evidence Group

² Fisheries and Seafood Scheme

Table 1: Breakdown of estimated costs for the 2025/2026 financial period for the Natural Disturbance Study.

Project component	Estimated cost (Ex VAT)
Multibeam surveys	£33,000.00
ROV data analysis	£16,000.00
Multibeam data analysis	£12,000.00
Marker buoys	£1,000.00
Accommodation	£1,000.00
Vessel fuel	£4,500.00
Travel	£2,500.00
<i>Officer time</i>	<i>£60,000.00</i>
Total	£130,000.00

The FASS claim for funding secured for the 2024/2025 financial period is currently being processed by the MMO.

Rates of damage assessment

Natural England have secured £7,200 of funding for the analysis of existing video footage of in situ gears to support the rates of damage assessment.